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ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL – Special Meeting

Chairman Breneman called to order a Special Meeting of the Erie County Council at 5:00 p.m. at the Erie County Council Chambers, 140 West 6th Street, Room 117, Erie, PA. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Mrs. Loll read the following prayer/invocation:

“Let us pray. It is the season of forgiving, new beginnings and thinking of others. We want to leave a mark on the earth in the hearts of others that they will remember fondly. It is the season for smiles and embraces to celebrate life and the beauty of what is exploding around us. We are reminded that we must govern not with anger and spite but with the best of meanings and thoughts for others. As we look deep inside old and young alike, there is a place we know that we keep the caring for others and in this time it will burst urging us on to grow and keep the hope that we do our best as we have been charged to do.”.

Roll Call

The County Clerk called the roll:

Members Present: Mr. DiMattio
 Mrs. Fatica
 Dr. Foust
 Mr. Horton
 Mr. Leone
 Mrs. Loll
 Mr. Breneman

Members Absent: None.

Also Present: Douglas R. Smith, County Clerk
 Sue Ellen Pasquale, Manager of Accounting
 James Sparber, Director of Finance
 Joseph Maloney, CPA
 Thomas Talarico, Solicitor

Hearing of The Public

Freda Tepfer, Erie, Pa; Ms. Tepfer urged Council and members in the audience to go on line and look at the master plan for the Bayfront and see how the area should be preserved that is the nature and backyard for people who don’t have a car and can’t get to Presque Isle easily. She also urged Council to adopt the registration fee ordinance. She stated that most counties in the state are already collecting this fee. It is not a burden on vehicle owners and a project that could benefit from part of the use of the fee would be the rehabilitation of the McBride Viaduct. She stated it is an important resource for east Erie.

Joel Miller, Summit Township; Mr. Miller discussed the HRC ordinance amendments and determining whether to consider someone’s criminal history ten years from the point of conviction. The Apartment Association feels that the time should be based on the length of time that someone has been out of jail, prison, off probation. If someone was convicted of a violent crime 25 years ago and got out of prison a month ago, they are not necessarily ready to rent and landlords should be able to consider that and the time period should be connected to the time of release. In regards to Section 9 of the ordinance, Mr. Miller felt that the wording should be re-worked because if someone is applying for an apartment, an application is usually done and it is all about determining their source of income and whether they can pay for the apartment. This would also be how a landlord would find out if there is criminal history. He stated that by federal regulations, the applications have to be kept so the landlord can prove they have not discriminated.

Charles Mock, Erie, Pa; Rev. Mock was in support of the \$5 fee to be levied to increase revenue for various reasons especially around revitalization. He felt that there are certain sections of the city that need all of the additional revenue as possible to make it a part of the Refocus Erie development strategy. There is a tremendous amount of funding being built up to develop

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downtown, but he wanted to know what kind of equity was being built to help the other areas of the city of Erie. He stated that bridges could be saved through additional revenue and support for the sake of the most vulnerable people in the community. He is concerned about the reports that suggest there is a section of people in Erie who could care less about certain sections of the city and the evidence is the lack of resources that go into those certain sections. The McBride Viaduct is a specific area he was speaking about – where 30% of people in that area are low income and very diverse in their demography. The bridge being closed does not help the businesses in that area to attract customers. He asked that when thinking about developing Erie, all of Erie, to make all of Erie better, don't leave one section behind, think about all of the folks and the unintentional consequences that will take place if this bridge remains closed. With this fee, this is one of the creative ways that the bridge could be saved and sustain the bridges that need to be sustained. He felt that there are reasons to save and reason to demolish and he asked that Council think about how additional revenue could be used to support these issues and send a signal to all of the people in Erie that Council cares about every section in town.

Lisa Austin, Erie, Pa; Ms. Austin applauded the remarks made by Rev. Mock. She wanted to thank Council for their service and appreciate all of the work they are doing. She hoped that Council would support three important pieces of legislation. She stated she met a young man who was crying because he couldn't find a job and had a criminal record, but he paid his time and wanted the opportunity to work. Ms. Austin then asked for Council's support on the countywide land bank, which she felt is something important to the regional revitalization. She wanted to add to Rev. Mock's comments regarding the \$5 registration fee in order to create a pool of money that could be used for municipal roadways, bike paths, and to repair and revitalize existing structures like the McBride Viaduct. She stated that it would cost less to repair the bridge than it would to tear it down. PennDOT stated that money available that could be directly put into this project is \$1.7 million. This would come from PennDOT to the city. With the funds that would be raised through the registration fee, they could be used in part to help to make up the balance that would be necessary. She commented that there are many grants that could be applied for to help with this funding as well. She asked Council to support these three ordinances and thanked them for their work.

Mark Kibbe, Millcreek Township; Mr. Kibbe is a realtor in Erie and on the GEBOR. He wanted to thank Council for their efforts to find a solution to the growing problem of blight in the community. The two proposals put forth begin to address the issue countywide and each contain a number of very positive provisions designed to move the ball forward. He did not have a preference for either proposal but urged Council to work closely with the city of Erie and Mayor Schember to coordinate efforts to address issues and by working together, greater strides can be made to get the issue addressed. He also urged Council to include on the Board a realtor, someone with extensive knowledge of the process of buying and selling real estate. This knowledge would be central to any effective solution to the blight issue. The city's land bank has a realtor on its board of directors and GEBOR is ready to assist the County in this important endeavor. He also spoke about Council's consideration of increasing the recording fee for deeds and mortgages by \$14.25, to increase funds available for addressing blight. Mr. Kibbe stated that does not seem like a lot of money, but he urged Council to carefully take into account what home buyers already pay when they go to purchase a new home. The average price of a single family home in Erie County is currently around \$136,000. Assuming they purchased that home with a conventional mortgage, a minimum 5% down, the out of pocket costs for the home buyer would be in excess of \$17,000. In addition to the downpayment, that amount includes financing costs, inspection costs, transfer taxes, title insurance, the \$100 city of Erie engineering fee for homes in the city, and many more. Each time a new fee is added to the list, the number of potential home buyers is reduced. Realtors see firsthand every day how home buyers pay very close attention to these costs and very often small adjustments to these costs determine whether they move forward with the purchase or not. He urged Council to reject this fee increase.

Brent Davis, Greene Township; Mr. Davis read the following statement: "As I've heard many on Council during the campaign trail speak about the principals of government and fighting for Erie County and its residents, many talked about having jobs with sustainable wages and aiding those to rise from poverty through empowerment. Yet the fact remains that 5.3% of Erie County, totaling

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over 7,000 residents, still remain on unemployment. That is just the tip of the iceberg for those that are registered. When you talk about a \$5 increase to the vehicle fees, what does that seem to many of us with jobs – minuscule. But the reality is, for instance last week, a mother of two was caught in traffic, four bald tires on her car, as myself and two of my workers got out and helped push her to the side of the road. \$5 to some of these people that are caught in the trap of poverty is a large amount of money. The average entry level wage in Erie County, according to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, is \$19,070. This \$5 is simply another link in a chain that is all too heavy for folks who are struggling in poverty. The real struggle is out there. It's all throughout the county. There are many that are quietly struggling with poverty and bills. When I ran for office and when many of you were elected, we chose to carry a torch to represent all of Erie County – that's all the municipalities – including those out in west county, Corry, and so on. We have a responsibility when stepping forward into public service to make the hard decisions, to have the difficult conversations, and embody that intestinal fortitude to take the hard right over the easy wrong. Instating this \$5 fee is exactly that time. You can vote for a tax increase or a fee, call it what you will, it's \$5 now and soon to become \$25, \$50, and \$100 and becomes unmanageable, and fill the County coffers, yet again, with millions of dollars on the backs of hardworking Erie County residents. I implore you to vote no. Vote no and send a message to the rest of the counties across Pennsylvania that we will stand against increased taxation, even if we must stand alone. Send our message and say to Pennsylvania and the rest of the nation that we want your business, that we want your families, and we want your investments. Vote no to the increased taxes and increased fees. Thank you.”.

Jim McGoey, Erie, Pa; Mr. McGoey stated he agreed with everything that Mark Kibbe stated earlier. In regards to the formation of the board that would run either of the land banks, Council mentioned hiring an executive director and staff. This could be reduced if you had a realtor, an appraiser, a banker, and an attorney on that board. If that doesn't work, there is already a County arm of government in place now with an executive director and staff that could administer this money. He suggested that he is trying to save the \$1 million for blight and not reduce that by \$200,000 or \$300,000 for salaries. He suggested Council consider using the County Redevelopment Authority as the arm to administer this whole project.

Julie Minich, Erie, Pa; She encouraged Council to adopt the ordinance for the increase in registration fees. She stated that a car is an option and there are ways to get out of poverty and not having a car is one way. She commented that the bus is a good alternative. She supports this ordinance because there needs to be pedestrian bridges.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Leone moved to approve the minutes from the December 12, 2017 Regular meeting. This was seconded by Dr. Foust and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

**Reports of
County Officials**

Mr. Horton stated that the Finance Committee met on Thursday, December 14, 2017, and agreed to place Ordinances 87, 124-128, 139 and 140, 2017, along with Resolutions 64, 67 and 68, 2017, and one appointment to the Erie County Industrial Development Authority.

Mr. Breneman read the following statement:

“During the course of the 2018 Erie County Budget review and deliberations, I requested all 19 recipients of unrestricted County grants to provide copies of how they spent those grants in previous years. Those grants amounted to nearly \$2 million. From what I was told, such a request for information has never been made before and for years prior, the grants were normally renewed year after year, including the occasional increase. Prior to 2007, many of these grants were paid for out of the General Fund, but since then have been paid out of the County's portion of Gaming revenue. As of right now, there is no formal grant request process for an organization to seek these funds, be it their first time or for the yearly renewal consideration. Nor is there a meaningful review or reporting framework for how the grant was utilized. A few of my colleagues and I have advocated for better reporting and better standardization of how these County grants are accessed

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and used and I am hopeful that Council and the Administration will see fit to continue down this path in the coming year.

After seeing how some of these grants were used, Council reduced or eliminated some of these grants and has restricted the grant to one such organization – GECAC. In restricting those grant dollars to GECAC, we sought further information regarding how and why GECAC used those County grant dollars. Many of us were shocked to see that GECAC used their grants to pay for such things as their annual dinner, at around \$25,000; meals and other expenses for GECAC Board members at around \$10,000; meals and other expenses for GECAC staff at around \$9,000; conference expenses at around \$22,000; insurance for their Board members at around \$9,000; organization membership fees at around \$13,000; and sponsorship of events at \$23,000 – mind you this is County taxpayer dollars sponsoring such events with GECAC’s name on it.

This led me to question why we pay them anything and what I discovered is that GECAC is truly an outlier in Pennsylvania. Under further analysis, I learned that the majority of Community Action Committees and Area Agencies on Aging, which GECAC is designated for both, in nearby and comparable counties, has significantly lower overhead and administrative costs. GECAC in Erie County is an anomaly in that Erie County provides this organization with an unrestricted grant for purposes that seemingly every other like organization in Pennsylvania is able to do independent of their county. Even counties that have a CAC or AAA in house, where they run it as a department instead of a separate non-profit, are able to do so largely without additional county dollars. They are able to meet their mission goals through the block grants they receive and other revenues to include fees and fundraising. Fundraising is something that GECAC reports they do not do.

Years ago I was initially told that GECAC uses county dollars in order to bring in even greater state and federal dollars. However, this is largely a false narrative. Because GECAC receives those grant dollars, over \$28 million, by nature of being the designated Community Action Committee or Area Agency on Aging for Erie County. They receive that \$28 million irrespective of what Erie County gives them. For instance, if any other organization or County department had their designation or contracts, they too would receive that amount from the state or federal government without additional local match.

Out of the roughly \$700,000 we provide unrestricted to GECAC, only about \$97,000 is used as actual “match” dollars for small programs that are indeed good programs, but are not core services for the Area Agency on Aging. These match dollars are for ancillary programs that are often run by United Ways, church groups, Chambers of Commerce and so on. GECAC uses the remainder of the County grants for administrative expenses.

I must commend GECAC for providing most of the information requested of them in a timely manner, though they were not entirely forthright. It was like pulling teeth to get GECAC to provide the true match dollar amounts, and we were often provided the vague line that they use the county dollars to support administrative costs. This regularly provided remark is unusual because again, seemingly every other entity of this type in Pennsylvania is able to meet their mission without such a financial contribution from their county.

Earlier this month at a meeting held by the Administration, Council, and GECAC, we informed them that many of these expenses were not acceptable even under County practices. GECAC executives explained that they would happily oblige not to use the funds for such purposes, such as meals for Board members, but they were adamant that their grant amount stay the same. This, to me, demonstrates their lack of concern for the public’s money because if anything, they should request less dollars if merely to comply with such county practices.

GECAC executives even admitted that they have kept certain programs at level funding, even though the state has shifted their focus and thus grant dollars, on other services. If GECAC were a County department, such a shift in state funding would likely have led to changes in county funding as well. Sit through any budgetary meeting regarding the County Health Department to see this as an example.

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What also stood out to me were the rental expenses. I had thought that GECAC owned their building so I looked up the property on the County website and discovered it was owned by another entity – the Greater Erie Economic Development Corporation – GEEDC. Because their names are so similar and because they are registered as one, I will hereafter refer to GEEDC as “the Foundation”.

This prompted me to learn more about GECAC, the Foundation, and their relationship. Over the past two months, I have collected a mountain of information through federal filings and information provided both in writing and in person by GECAC. What I discovered was worrisome. Though I’ve attached to this memo even more details (See below) on their finances, the following are some key highlights that should speak for themselves.

Since 2001, GECAC has paid the Foundation over \$8.5 million in rent for a building that is only assessed at \$1.4 million. The rent is paid for by the programmatic occupancy fees granted to GECAC by county, state, and federal grants, including a significant portion of the county’s unrestricted grant.

For charitable purpose, the rent is claimed to be below market value at about \$5/\$6 per square foot, but GECAC assumes the cost of maintenance, which effectively puts their true occupancy cost at double that rate. According to their IRS filings, this rent has varied wildly since 2001, from as low as \$200,000 to as high as \$1.2 million. If GECAC owned this building with a mortgage, for comparison, they could have saved over \$5 million for that same time period.

For over 40 years, GECAC and the Foundation have shared the same CEO from R. Benjamin Wiley to Ronald Steele and recently Georgia Del Frio, who according to federal filings, was acting CEO for both organizations. This shared CEO collected salary from both organizations, with the Foundation claiming that the CEO worked for them for 20 hours per week. This combined salary usually amounted to around \$200,000 per year.

This relationship with having a shared CEO ended recently, and apparently informally, when there was disagreement between the two organizations about who would succeed Mr. Steele as CEO for GECAC. The Foundation board members also collected a salary of between \$60,000 and \$110,000 per year combined. According to their IRS filings, their Board members worked 8 hours per week. The Foundation maintains a sizable pension, presumably for their CEO and perhaps their Board members. Because of the money granted to the Foundation from GECAC, the Foundation recently cashed in on investments worth over \$16 million.

Despite serving as a revolving revenue source for GECAC, there is word now that the Foundation is seeking to distance itself from GECAC, leaving GECAC without what has effectively been their de facto foundation for over 40 years.

For anyone who is interested, I have shared all of this information and the mountain of source documents with Council’s office, our financial advisor, the Administration, the County Controller, and the press. I believe that the public deserves to know how their dollars are spent and they should know that, at least in this case, those dollars could serve a more meaningful purpose elsewhere.

I want to point to the gravity of why this is all very important. Often we hear from non-profits like the community centers, who approach city or county governments requesting support funding. They are often turned away with such lines as ‘we don’t have the money’ or that ‘we would like to give you funding but we cannot simply afford to fund everything’. Furthermore, county officials regularly critique every penny spent by County departments and some Authorities, while overlooking such a significant expense that has amounted to millions and millions of dollars virtually unchecked and right under our nose.

To be perfectly frank, I think any rational person could see that the County has been unfair and indeed reckless in funding GECAC in this manner and that the County should end this practice

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immediately. Aside from the \$97,000 in County dollars that GECAC utilizes for true local match, the County should limit any future funding to GECAC for contracted services only. The remainder of those funds should go to support other programs and agencies, including the community college. GECAC, who has essentially been using these County dollars as a slush fund, should streamline their administrative costs so that they operate as efficiently as similar agencies around the Commonwealth. They might also want to consider purchasing the building they currently rent, or find another building elsewhere.

Additionally, the Foundation has a responsibility to GECAC because not only have the two organizations been joined at the hip for over 40 years, but the Foundation owes every penny they have to GECAC, and GECAC with the support of the County should do everything in their power to ensure the Foundation continues to fulfill their financial duty to support GECAC. No one should simply accept the separation of these two organizations if such information that was provided by GECAC executives turns out to be true because such a separation would be financially abusive and negligent to GECAC, and would negatively impact the credibility of the Foundation.

Lastly, I would encourage the Foundation to end the practice of paying their Board members and to operate more visibly in supporting the needs of the Erie community. I am making these facts public because I understand the pressure elected officials and agency leaders can feel when it comes to practices that have gone on for decades and given the stature of the organization and people involved, such pressure could make it difficult for the necessary changes that need to occur. The vast majority of this information exists in the public domain already but when put together tells a story no one could ignore. Because my term on Council is almost over, I am unable to pursue such changes officially, so I will leave it up to County officials and an informed public to see it through. This matter effects the public's dollars, our community's designated anti-poverty and aging services agency, and an organization that owes its non-profit status to provide a charitable purpose to our community. Given the rate of pervasive poverty in our community and the roles of everyone involved, it is my hope that this becomes a teachable moment and a catalyst for positive change. Don't just take my word for it, look at the facts and decide for yourself. Again, I have provided this information to staff, financial advisor, the Controller, etc."

OLD BUSINESS

Ord. 87, 2017 – HRC

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 87, 2017, "Amendment to Ordinance Number 97, 2016 – Erie County Human Relations Commission". Chairman Breneman stated that Council discussed this ordinance with the solicitor and it has been reviewed at length. Council feels that the ordinance requires a lengthy review by the solicitor because it seems that there were some things that were contradictory and needs to be tightened up before it can be passed. This ordinance remained tabled.

Ord. 124, 2017 – Amend. ECGRA in Admin. Code

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 124, 2017, "Amending Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority Article II, Section 5(D)(1)(f)(ii) of the Administrative Code of Erie County, Previously Amended by Ordinance Number 145, 2016". This was moved by Mr. Leone, seconded by Mrs. Fatica, and carried in a 4-3 vote, with Dr. Foust, Mr. DiMattio, and Chairman Breneman voting No.

Ord. 125, 2017 – Amend. Erie Co. Affordable Housing Fund Ordinance

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 125, 2017, "Amending the Erie County Affordable Housing Fund Ordinance". This was moved by Mr. Leone, seconded by Mrs. Loll, and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

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**Ord. 126, 2017 –
Auth. The Org. of
NIRF**

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 126, 2017, “Authorizing the Organization of the Neighborhood and Infrastructure Revitalization Fund (NIRF) and Governing Board”. This was moved by Dr. Foust and seconded by Mr. DiMattio.

Dr. Foust commented that he was going to move to make this a 7 member Board, but the previous action to expand the Board of ECGRA makes it moot so he did not amend the Ordinance so it will remain as is.

Ordinance Number 126, 2017 then carried in a 4-3 vote, with Mr. Leone, Mrs. Fatica, and Mrs. Loll voting No.

**Ord. 127, 2017 –
Create the Erie
Co. Land Bank**

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 127, 2017, “An Ordinance to Create the Erie County Land Bank, Providing for a Board of Directors, Powers, and Funding”. This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mr. DiMattio, and failed in a 3-4 vote, with Mr. Horton, Mr. DiMattio, Dr. Foust, and Chairman Breneman voting No.

**Ord. 128, 2017 – Impl.
Fee for Local Use –
Non Exempt Vehicle
Registration**

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 128, 2017, “An Ordinance for the Implementation of a Fee for Local use as Provided by 75 Pa.C.S.A. §1935 for Each Nonexempt Vehicle Registered to an Address in Erie County”. This was moved by Mr. Leone and seconded by Dr. Foust.

Dr. Foust commented that he fully appreciates where the members of the public who came to speak were coming from but as an elected official, he has to take into consideration that if he is going to increase a fee or tax he has to return what type of benefits will come about in the community as a result of assessing that fee or tax, and does it outweigh, hopefully far outweigh, whatever cost is applied to the public for the benefit that’s going to follow it. He felt that for \$5 per person, the millions of dollars in benefits that will be brought to those that live in poverty or close to poverty to improve the community is worth it and that is why he would vote yes on the ordinance.

Mrs. Loll commented that she was initially against until she read all the details that she could and found that there is quite a huge list of exemptions of vehicles that do not get taxed on this issue and she would be voting yes.

Mrs. Fatica stated she looked at this ordinance much like she did from her medical background. Prevention costs are much less than the cost to fix something. She took this analogy and spoke with Bill Petit from PennDOT and asked if Council asks for \$5 now, will that mean that it will prevent from asking for a lot of money when the bridges collapse. She stated that in recent weeks, there has been more and more talk around the country about infrastructure and the issue with bridges. It’s not just that this will allow for the inspections and preventions of problems that would end up costing a lot of money, but also prevent the failure of bridge structures that could cost lives and she will vote yes.

Mr. DiMattio commented that he received a lot of phone calls and emails and he stated that he is not in favor of this ordinance. He stated that \$5 will not change what his family will eat today or the fact that his children will go back to college the next semester, but it does affect a large group of people who live in his district. Over the years, he has tried to look out for that person who is struggling. When Council increased taxes by \$22 per year, that may not sound like a lot to anyone, but if we don’t stand up for what we truly believe in, Mr. DiMattio felt that Council would be making a mistake. He knows the money will be well spent but in looking at the ordinance closely,

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it is PennDOT who decides where that money goes and there are very stringent rules as to where that money will be spent. He would not be in favor of this ordinance.

Chairman Breneman clarified that it is raising the fee up to \$5 more. He stated that a lot of people ask about the gas tax, but a lot of the money that was to be used for roadways and infrastructure ended up being used for state highway police. They do need money to operate but it's a catch 22 on municipalities that are unwilling to merge or refuse to have their property taxes support a police force, what ends up happening is the state police end up serving as the law enforcement for that municipality and that money goes to them because local governments won't look for cost saving measures for policing on their own. He stated he would rest the fault on the state legislature because they could create a separate revenue stream for the state police and they have talked about it at length, but they are going to the counties saying they're sorry they didn't give enough money for roadways and bridges but you can raise taxes so you do have enough money for roadways and bridges. He urged everyone to talk to their state legislature to fix the problem.

Ordinance Number 128, 2017, then carried in a 6-1 vote, with Mr. DiMattio voting No.

**Ord. 139, 2017 – Auth.
Recorder of Deeds to
Collect Add'l Fee**

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 139, 2017, "An Ordinance of the County of Erie, Pennsylvania, Authorizing the Recorder of Deeds to Collect Additional Recording Fees for the Express Purpose of Demolition of Blighted Property Within the County". This was moved by Mr. Leone and seconded by Dr. Foust.

Dr. Foust wanted to amplify what was said about the last ordinance that these will be funds that the local communities can use to help fight blight, complement the efforts of the neighborhood revitalization fund, etc., but also the reason why a lot of these remedies have to be assessed at the local level because they are not being addressed at the state level where they really ought to be. He stated that it makes it more expensive at the local level because all the Commonwealth citizens are not sharing in the cost it's just the local community.

Mr. DiMattio commented that contrary to what he said with the last item, this ordinance has to do with people purchasing new homes and this isn't an arbitrary tax on everyone throughout Erie County and what was enacted with the land bank moving forward, these funds can be used very effectively, he hoped not just in the city but throughout Erie County.

Ordinance Number 139, 2017, then carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

**Ord. 140, 2017 – Amend.
Admin. Code**

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 140, 2017, "Amendment to the Administrative Code, Article IV, Section 12D – Financial Procedures". This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mr. Leone and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

**Res. 64, 2017 – Appt. of
Firm to Perform Single
Audit**

Mr. Smith gave a reading of Resolution Number 64, 2017, "Appointment of Firm to Perform Comprehensive Single Audit for Erie County and Related Funds for the Year Ending December 31, 2017". This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mr. Leone, and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

NEW BUSINESS

**Res. 67, 2017 – Inc.
In Fees for Council
CPA**

Mr. Smith gave a reading of Resolution Number 67, 2017, "Increase in Fees for Services for County Council Certified Public Accounting Firm". This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mr. Horton, and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

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**Res. 68, 2017 – Appr.
COG Annual Budget
For 2018**

Mr. Smith gave a reading of Resolution Number 68, 2017, “Resolution to Approve the Annual Budget of the Erie Area Council of Governments for the Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2018”. This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mr. Leone, and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

**BOARD/AUTHORITY
APPOINTMENTS**

Mr. Leone moved to approve the reappointment of Ron Jones to an in-process five year term on the Erie County Industrial Development Authority. This was seconded by Mr. Horton and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. DiMattio wanted confirmation on the vote of Ordinance 124, 2017 because there were only three signatures on it and it is a rather important ordinance. Chairman Breneman stated that Mr. Horton should sign because he did vote in the affirmative.

Chairman Breneman stated that most of his parting words will be in the Erie Times News Editorial. He read the following statement: “This will be my fourth and final year on Council and I have to say it has been quite interesting, particularly working a second job in order to do this. I’m not going to say anything about age because I’m by far not the youngest member to ever serve on this body, but of recent I am. I am hopeful that other young people will run for elected office, particularly when it comes to these seats. I know it can often be, and I personally understand because it takes time out of your schedule. I’ve had to take money out of my paycheck in order to attend a lot of these meetings. Not just these meetings and committee meetings, but also with the numerous liaison appointments and other things that go as part of this job. Being paid \$4.84 an hour to be a Council member, you are definitely not in it for the money and hopefully not in it for the fame because I still have people that know my name but don’t know what I do or which Council I’m on. It’s been a great experience and I think in the past four years, we have moved forward a lot of transformative projects and I’m proud to say it’s been successful. But I have to say other than the Council members that I’ve had the honor of serving with, including our late friend Phil Fatica, I learned a lot from everyone here. It’s been great. While I will not be sitting behind here, I’m not going anywhere. I still own a home and I probably wouldn’t be able to sell it and earn a profit because I’ve put so much money into fixing it up. I want to thank Doug, Lana and Deneé for being probably the best support I possibly could have had, who have put up with my random phone calls over the past four years – whenever I have an idea, and I couldn’t do it without you guys. If people don’t know this, an elected official is only as good as your staff and I think County Council has a fantastic staff and I know that regardless of who is in this seat that you guys will help make them successful, so thank you. To Tom and Joe, you guys have been a great support. I can’t imagine any elected body that doesn’t have a financial advisor or solicitor. It definitely made our world easier and more interesting, but thank you again for all of your help and assistance.”.

Mr. DiMattio stated that though my family is not here, for what they have put up with for the past five years is quite remarkable. He felt that Chairman Breneman brought up a great point, because he used to tell people that unless they are here they don’t understand but there are days that he had to find time to go to work. There are an awful lot of demands, people pulling at you for answers and trying to get things figured out and it’s much more labor intensive than anyone really has any idea about. He thanked Doug, Deneé, and Lana for their absolute remarkable job. They are a wonderful staff and tops in the courthouse. He thanked Tom and Joe for doing a wonderful job. He stated he will most miss the people he’s met, not just in his district but at the courthouse as well, and a lot of the friends he’s made, whether it is Sue Ellen Pasquale and Luigi, or people he would see from the courthouse out in the community. He stated it has been a rewarding experience and he hoped that all the decisions he made were for the right reasons. A lot of times they are not popular and a lot of times Council doesn’t always agree, but he stated there are times when there are lively discussions, but in the end, they always came to a consensus. He felt that is what is

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important that people don't understand about County Council or at least County government. There are things that go on in Washington and Harrisburg that are terribly unsavory and if you have a D or an R next to your name in the middle you shall not meet. He stated that Council compromises on things and at the end of the day, if he votes yes and someone else votes no, they all still go out to eat after the meetings, they still get along, and remain friends at the end of the day. He felt that is what was most important and what he will miss most.

Mrs. Loll commented that those in the audience who don't know these two gentlemen who are leaving, they will be very missed. They are very good Council members and have done a wonderful job and she stated that Council will remember them with a lot of fondness. She stated it is more than just seven people sitting up there, they are like family and families don't always agree, but families come together and that's what Council has done. She commented that these two gentlemen worked very hard for very little pay and gave all they could to the job they were elected to do and it will be like a family member moving away. She thanked both of them for hard work and dedication.

Dr. Foust stated that Chairman Breneman and Mr. DiMattio have both done good work and wished them both good luck. He stated that they it has been a pleasure working with them.

There being no further business, the meeting then adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Deneé M. Breter, Council Secretary
